



# Montgomery County Council

*For Immediate Release*

November 27, 2012

Contact: 240-777-7960

## **Montgomery County Council Names Food Recovery Work Group**

*Non-Profits, Businesses and Government Agencies Will  
Develop a Strategic Action Plan for Implementation*

N  
E  
W  
S  
  
R  
E  
L  
E  
A  
S  
E

ROCKVILLE, Md., Nov. 27, 2012—The Montgomery County Council today appointed members of the County's Food Recovery Work Group that over the next few months will develop a strategic action plan for implementation. The work group that must submit an interim report to the Council by March 31 and a final report by July 1.

On Oct. 16, the Council unanimously adopted Resolution 17-564, which established the Montgomery Food Recovery Work Group. This initiative, spearheaded by Councilmember Valerie Ervin, is based on the successful model of food redistribution called the Food Recovery Network at the University of Maryland College Park campus. The group collects food which would otherwise be wasted because it was unused by food services in cafeterias, from sporting events and special events (such as alumni gatherings). The Food Recovery Network then redistributes it to those in need.

Food insecurity is a nationwide challenge. The Capital Area Food Bank reports that 40 percent of its clients in the Washington area must choose between food and other necessities like housing, utilities, medical care and transportation.

In Montgomery County, the current economic crisis has forced more people than ever to ask for public assistance. In 2012, the self-sufficiency standard—the minimum income families require to achieve financial security—for a family of four in the County is approximately \$82,877. Approximately one-third of Montgomery County students qualify for Free and Reduced Meals (FARMs), a poverty indicator and a figure that may be higher due to underreporting.

Many cities have food recovery programs, such as those sponsored by the D.C. Central Kitchen in Washington, D.C., and City Harvest in New York City. In Montgomery County, the Manna Food Center is the main food bank and nearly every non-profit organization that deals with food insecurity issues relies on Manna to provide food for their clients.

A new food recovery program in Montgomery County would enhance existing resources for Manna and other non-profit groups. Manna Food Center distributed approximately 3.5 million pounds of food to 115,000 individuals in Fiscal Year 2012. The number of individuals seeking assistance continues to grow, with an increase in those served of more than 200 percent since FY04.

Members appointed to the work group include: Anne Sheridan of Share our Strength; Ben Simon of the Food Recovery Network; Brett Myers of Nourish Now; Jackie Coyle of Shepherd's Table; Jeremy Criss of the County's Department of Economic Development; Kate Garvey of County's Department of Health and Human Services; Kathi Carey-Fletcher of Montgomery College; Barry F. Scher of the Capital Area Food Bank; Lindsay Smith of Montgomery County Food Policy Council; Marie Henderson of the Interfaith Works; Mark Bergel of A Wider Circle; Marla Caplon of Montgomery County Public Schools Food and Nutrition Services; Michele Dudley of Crossroads Farmer's Market; Minerva Delgado of Manna Food Center; Patricia Drumming of Rainbow Community Development Center; Sarah Cunningham of Maryland Restaurant Association; James Perkins of Giant Food, LLC; Gregory Ten Eyck of Safeway, Inc.; Craig M. Shniderman of Food and Friends; and Richard Jackson of the County's Department of General Services.

"The food recovery initiative will not only help our area non-profit organizations who fight hunger, but should also reduce the amount of food that ends up in our waste stream," said Councilmember Ervin. "In my mind, this initiative is a win-win as those who donate food receive tax benefits and those in need receive healthy meals."

Creating a Council Implementation Work Group is necessary to evaluate the costs associated with creating a food recovery program and to develop a strategic action plan for implementation. This group will evaluate best practices, map existing resources, identify ways to enhance communication among non-profit organizations, service providers and food suppliers, and recommend needed legislative changes to assist in these efforts.

A report on the University of Maryland's Food Recovery Program was recently produced by County Cable Montgomery (CCM), the County government's public broadcast channel. The report can be viewed via YouTube at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJ1iX1KzFTA&feature=youtu.be>

####